

FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT



**Atlantic City Fire Department - Chief Scott Evans
Fire Prevention Bureau**

Fire Official - Mohammad Hatefi

**Investigation# :
Date/Time : 02/14/2025 05:38
Location : 3501 Boardwalk,B202
Lead Investigator : Kohler, Stephen, M**



Atlantic City Fire Department - Chief Scott Evans
Fire Prevention Bureau
1301 Bacharach Blvd Room 130
Atlantic City, NJ, 08401
Phone# (609) 347-5595
xxxxxxxxxx@xxxx.xxx
Attn: Fire Official Mohammad R. Hatefi

Fire Investigation with Cover Page

Printed On: 03/10/25 13:36

Atlantic City

Incident# : 25-000801 **Investigation#** : **Police Call#** : 2025011584
Report By : Kohler, Stephen M
Incident Date : 02/14/2025 05:38:36 **Location** : 3501 Boardwalk, B202
CFS Code : Fire- Structure **CSZ** : Atlantic City, NJ 08401
Report Date : 03/03/2025 10:04:38 **Investigation Type** : Building fire

Investigator(s)

Name	Position	Assigned Date	Assigned By	Unit#	On Scene Date
Kohler, Stephen	Lead	02/14/2025 10:45:00		FM8 - Command Vehicle	02/14/2025 11:25:00

Scene

Scene Information

Scene Secured?	: Yes	Secured By	: ACFD
Scene Released	: 02/14/2025 06:55:00	Released To	: Atlantic City Police
Property Value	: \$0.00	Property Loss	: \$0.00
Content Value	: \$0.00	Content Loss	: \$0.00
Authority to Enter	: Exigency	Scene Notes	: No values will be given for property value, property loss, or content loss for this fire.

Weather Conditions

Visibility	: Clear	Wind Direction	: North West
Temperature (F)	: 30.0	Wind Speed	: 1.0
Relative Humidity	: 76	Precipitation	: 0
Lightning	: No	Elevation	:
Lat / Long	: 39.349759000000		-74.451207000000

Structure

Occupancy/Construction

Property Use	: Multifamily dwelling. Includes apartments, condos, town houses, row houses, tenements.	Construction Year	:	Stories	: 1	Length	: 20
Construction	: Unprotected Non-combustible	Foundation Type	: Slab	Width	: 12		
Exterior Covering	: Concrete	Roof Construction	: Rubber / Latex Roofing				
Floor Construction	: Concrete	Building Status	: In Normal use				

Protection/Alarm/Security

Sprinklers?	☐	Windows	☐
Standpipes?	☐	Doors	☐
Alarm System?	☐	Security Camera?	☐
Smoke Detectors?	☒	Others	

Conditions

Doors	: Locked	Windows	: Secure
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Utilities

Electric	: Circuit Breakers	Water	: On
Gas/Fuel	: On	Telephone	: On



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Bank	Amp Rating	Label	Status
Left			
Vehicle			
Mobile Property Involved	: None	VIN#	: Stolen? ☐
Mobile Property Type	:	Model	: Alarm System? ☐
Mobile Property Make	:	Year	: No. of Keys
Plate#	:	Odometer	: Hidden Keys? ☐

Narrative

1. Incident Details

On Friday, February 14, 2025 at approximately 0538, the Atlantic City Fire Department was dispatched to 3501 Boardwalk, Unit B202, Atlantic City, NJ for the report of a structure fire. The property is listed as Block 23, Lot 1 on the City of Atlantic City Tax Map. The principal owner is listed as Jefferey Batterman (851 Geranium Dr, Warrington, PA 18976). The Atlantic City Fire Department under the Command of Deputy Chief William DiLorenzo responded and immediately initiated fire suppression efforts. For further information regarding Atlantic City Fire Department efforts, please refer to the incident report.

Fire loss or property loss estimates will not be factored into this report. Damages as a result of this fire were moderate in the living room area, with the remainder of the unit suffering significant heat and smoke damages. Additionally there was water damage to the northern and southern exposures, as well as the unit located, directly underneath the fire unit. Weather conditions at the time were as follows. Temperature 29 degrees Fahrenheit, humidity 76%, a dew point of 23 degrees, winds out of the West Northwest at 1MPH, and fair skies.

2. Scope of Investigation/Legal Considerations

On Friday, February 14, 2025 at approximately 0545, the Atlantic City Fire Marshals Office was requested to the scene for the purpose of conducting an investigation into the origin and cause of this fire. I received notification of this fire by Battalion Chief Kevin Munn and proceeded directly to the fire scene arriving at approximately 0630 on February 14, 2025. When I arrived on scene I met with Deputy Chief DiLorenzo, and there was no active fire suppression efforts, or overhaul happening. A warrantless entry into the premises was made for conducting an initial scene examination and fire investigation. During the investigation I quickly identified the area of origin as the southern facing wall. At approximately 0655 on February 14, 2025 I concluded the initial investigation, clearing the fire scene and turning it over to the Atlantic City Police Department, who was keeping the scene secure while waiting for the unit to be secured.

Investigative efforts documented within this fire report were to establish the origin and cause of this fire. Based on the overall data collected, reasonable hypotheses were developed and tested as to where and how this fire could have started.

3. Building Construction

An examination of the fire building revealed it is a 2 story attached garden style apartment, constructed using type 2 construction on a cement slab foundation. The fire was located on the 2nd floor. The apartment was constructed in 1955 and is approximately 266 Square according to the City of Atlantic City tax assessment information.

The interior of the building had a single door which you entered off of a common cement balcony. The interior of the unit was a studio type design with an open floor plan, with 1 large room which consisted of a living room/sleeping area, a closet and kitchen. A separate bathroom was located in the back left of the unit. The roof was a rubber membrane. The building sat on the northern side of the Atlantic City Boardwalk, and between South Providence Avenue, and South Hartford Avenue.

Electrical service is supplied via overhead cable and is attached to the building on the northern side of the building. The electrical panel to the unit was found on a southern facing wall closer towards the eastern side of the unit.

4. Fire Scene Examination

I conducted a detailed and systematic examination of the fire building, beginning with an external investigation and then proceeding to interior portions of the unit. In both areas I attempted to work from areas with the least amount of damage from the effects of fire, heat and smoke, to areas with the most significant amount of damage. An emphasis was made on recognition, identification and analysis of fire and heat patterns. Throughout the scene investigation, the steps of the scientific approach as described in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 921 was utilized. For purposes of this report, the West wall will be identified as the front side of the apartment, with the South wall facing the Atlantic Ocean.

There was evidence of fire from the exterior of the building, consisting of smoke stained large window, and heaving smoke staining coming from the front door, that had to be forced open during fire suppression operations.



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I then proceeded to interior portions of unit B202. The entire single floor unit was visually inspected. The apartment as a whole had an average fuel load for the size of the apartment and its use as a primarily being occupied during the summer months. As I entered Unit B202 I immediately noted areas of heavy charring and thermal damage on the southern facing wall. The remaining walls suffered from moderate smoke staining and minor thermal damage elsewhere in the unit. Fire damage with the most significant damage was midway between the western facing and eastern facing walls on the north side. This fire damage gradually became less significant as you moved further away from this area in all directions. The majority of the fire damage appeared to be in an area which would have been the entertainment unit, with additional storage for clothing on the sides. Directly above this area the ceiling showed significant fire and heat damage which is consistent of it being under direct fire attack. The northern facing wall had several electrical sockets, and cable outlet in this area as well. One electrical outlet in particular located on the lower part of the southern facing wall showed significant damage to it, and its connecting wires and protective coverings. Additionally there were clear lines of demarcation and a "V" shaped burn pattern in this area, coming from the lower electrical outlet. During my scene examining and attempting to get more detailed information from the electrical outlet, it caused some collapsing of the gypsum board in this area that was under direct fire attack.

5. Witness Statements

I spoke with several residents, and the condominium association management company during my investigation. They all reported similar electrical issues recently dating back to late last year. Electrical issues noted to me include but not limited to the following: Lights randomly going out, flickering of lights, thermal damage to various plugs and cable connections, plugs and electrical outlet becoming extremely hot during use.

Hawkeye Management the company who manages the condominium stated they have been aware of this problem, and it started in approximately November 2024 when the utility company who provides electrical service to the building (Atlantic City Electric) changed a transformer on the pole that provided electrical service to the building. Hawkeye Management further told me they passed on these concerns multiple time to Atlantic City Electric. Additionally, the management company told me they were also in the beginning phases of updating the building electrical system, and were told it was corroded due to the salt air.

6. Fire Spread Scenario

Based on the above mentioned findings, and unknown electrical event happened. It appears the arcing or heating of wires of an undetermined amount of time, likely started a fire between the wall and the entertainment unit. Elevated temperatures (typically above 170 degrees Fahrenheit) for periods of several hours a day can thermally deteriorate wood. This can cause physical and chemical changes without initially causing combustion. Once flaming combustion was achieved, the wood/plastic of the entertainment unit was ignited which allowed the fire to spread through established methods of heat transfer.

7. Conclusion

During the examination of the fire scene there was no evidence of any separate or unconnected fires. There was no presence of any ignitable liquid, hydrocarbon or any other ignitable liquids. No unexplainable or irregular burn patterns were observed. All the fire damage, growth and propagation could be traced to the lower electrical outlet located on the southern facing wall, and expanded to other areas through established methods of heat transfer. The examination of the fire scene determined that an unknown electrical event over an undetermined period of time was responsible for the ignition of surrounding material, was found to be the point of origin

THE CAUSE OF THIS FIRE IS ACCIDENTIAL DUE TO AN UNDETERMINED ELECTRICAL EVENT

Attachment

Date	File Name	Category	Remarks	File Size
Photo - Incident / Scene				
03/03/25	P2140081.JPG	Photo - Incident / Scene		2.280 MB
03/03/25	P2140080.JPG	Photo - Incident / Scene		2.530 MB
03/03/25	P2140079.JPG	Photo - Incident / Scene		2.253 MB
03/03/25	P2140078.JPG	Photo - Incident / Scene		2.663 MB
03/03/25	P2140077.JPG	Photo - Incident / Scene		2.225 MB
03/03/25	P2140076.JPG	Photo - Incident / Scene		2.217 MB
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Stephen M. Kohler

Kohler, Stephen M, Lead Investigator

Investigation Supervisor